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MEDIA MONITOR

More Disinformation on Public Broadcasting

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Although Public Broadcasting is largely financed with taxpayer dollars, the people who run it frequently give the impression that they are more interested in serving the enemies of America than the American people. A year ago they gave three hours of public television time to the former CIA agent who defected to the communist side, Philip Agee. Agee and his friends entertained the minuscule public television audience with a film designed to help accomplish Agee's announced objective of destroying the CIA.

Last January the Public Broadcasting Service managed through superhuman effort to get a propaganda film on the air supporting the cause of the communist-armed guerrillas in El Salvador in time to coincide with their so-called "final offensive." Since the lead time for this psy-warfare assault was very short, PBS accommodated the producers by providing them with \$40,000 from the PBS Special Events fund. That avoided the delay and possible rejection that they would have risked had they sought funding directly from the Corporation for Public Broadcasting.

We don't mean to suggest, however, that the Corporation for Public Broadcasting would be likely to refuse to finance a one-sided attack on American institutions or policy. Although Congress has ordered it to ensure that programs it finances that deal with controversial subjects are produced with strict adherence to objectivity and balance, the Corporation for Public Broadcasting regularly ignores that mandate.

The most recent example was a program that it funded designed to convince the viewers that the Reagan Administration plans to beef up our defenses are really a waste of money. The producers set out to prove that the Soviet military forces are really a paper tiger. Their theme was that we shouldn't be so concerned about them.

Early in the film, Ronald Reagan was shown saying that the Soviets now had twice as many surface ships as we had, three times as much artillery, four times as many tanks, and more ICBMs. Reagan observed that we were no longer negotiating from strength. Reagan didn't say the Soviet forces were invincible. He didn't say they were without weaknesses. He didn't say we were doomed. He simply pointed out that they now have us badly outnumbered with respect to several important weapons.

The PBS reply to Reagan was that "not all Americans agree that the Soviet armed forces are invincible." They went on to point out that Soviet tanks have some defects. They found a couple of army enlisted men who expressed the opinion that our tanks had more firepower and were more accurate. They noted that the most advanced Soviet fighter planes are not really so good as they are supposed to be. Their authority here was a youthful former aide to a defeated congressman noted for his anti-defense stance. They noted that Soviet soldiers have a drinking problem.

Utterly silent about the massive Soviet military buildup of the past decade, PBS tells us that our policy-makers are "still driven by the nightmare vision of an invincible Soviet Union." That is a strange way to describe those who realize that the U.S. is no longer invincible, thanks to the Soviet buildup while we slept.

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